

Informatics Student Course Feedback 2017/18

<http://www.inf.ed.ac.uk/teaching/surveys/2017-18>

This report contains feedback from students about a course taught in the School of Informatics during the 2017/18 academic year, in response to the following questions:

- What would you say to students interested in taking this course?
- What did you find most valuable about the course?
- What improvements, if any, would you make to the course?
- Please add any other comments you have about workshops and tutors

Each course organiser receives this report as well as statistics on multiple-choice responses. All these reports, together with student feedback about individual members of teaching staff, are collected and sent to the Director of Learning and Teaching.

Please note that these are personal responses from individual students: some courses only have a few responses and a small sample can be unrepresentative.

Stereotyping and bias, especially unconscious bias, is a serious concern in any survey gathering personal responses. All students received the rubric below before completing the surveys, and you can read a brief introduction to issues of unconscious bias on the university web pages at <http://edin.ac/2iypZBv>

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Rubric given to all students taking the end-of-course feedback survey

We value your opinions on the courses you take here at the University, as they allow us to shape future delivery and development. We welcome constructive comments about your courses, whether positive or negative, and ask you to give details about any issues in order to help the course organiser to understand and address them.

We encourage you to be aware of the potential for bias in the completion of these questionnaires, so we have developed resources which may be helpful to you:

- Equality, Diversity and Unconscious Bias (<http://edin.ac/2iypZBv>)

You also have a responsibility to provide feedback in a manner which does not breach the University's Dignity and Respect Policy:

- University of Edinburgh Dignity and Respect Policy (<http://edin.ac/1Cq0VZY>)

The results of the questionnaires will never be analysed in a way that seeks to identify individual students from their responses. However, should you wish to remain anonymous, please do not identify yourself in your answers to the survey questionnaire implicitly or explicitly.

Comments Report

What advice would you give to a student taking this course in future?

- Even if you have taken Inf 2A or you come from a Linguistics background, it never hurts to go over what you have already learnt even if you might find some parts of this course repetitive. Start the second coursework early - it's not too challenging but will be due when there are lots of other deadlines on!
- I mean, if you wanna do NLP you have to take this course, so you might as well. It's an easy course, but make sure not to fall behind!
- It's a very easy course but essential to your development as a Computer Scientist. You will understand everything even better if you also take IAML
- Lectures are great, but don't teach you how to code the assignments at all. That's expected, but the lab leaders also did not help with coding very much, so unless you know Python very well already the assignments were difficult.
- Take it. It's great.
- There is a significant overlap with Inf2A's natural language part but, truth to be told, the topics are dug into in more detail and with more time for interesting and practical extensions, so it's certainly not boring! Also, Alex Lascarides and Sharon Goldwater are both very involved researchers in the area and good lecturers and I can only recommend that you go to their lectures. Oh, and, by the way, if you're only after neural networks, then this course is probably not for you :-)
- This course is excellent, take it and enjoy it.
The workload is pretty fair in my opinion and the assignments are posted well in advance.
Go to the lectures, they are both useful and really engaging.
- This course taught you foundations about NLP, very good introductory course.

Comments Report

What did you find most valuable about the course?

- Alex is very knowledgeable and passionate about the material, and she provides helpful examples. She makes every effort to be helpful outside of class.
- Great lectures and close orientation on the J&F textbook
- I liked applying the theory to coursework tasks - the detailed and quick feedback for these was fantastic.
- I really liked Professor Lascarides's teaching style.
- Quality of lectures
- The lecturer is fantastic, extremely well organised, and really passionate. It shows.
- The lectures, for sure. She is very good at explanations, approachable, and helpful.
- The professionalism of Mrs Lascarides; the amount of additional useful info she's been able to provide on top of the core of the curriculum as a result of her research involvement in the area.
- learning about NLP

Comments Report

What improvements, if any, would you make to the course?

- Better organised tutorials or stronger control of the students in the tutorial room, it was impossible to find a free computer that wasn't already logged in
- Had the coursework been not so easy, it would've been a better learning experience in my opinion. You know, just adding a bit more of an overstretch, maybe one more challenging question at the end of each part (doesn't have to be about implementing something, could be more about analysing/thinking).
- I did well on the first assignment, but it shows 0/100 on my transcript. I know the first coursework was just for feedback, but still, it would be nice if it showed that I actually did the assignment.
- I think the course could be more technically challenging.
- I think tutorials would really help for this course, as with lectures and self-directed studying in labs I found it easy to fall behind.
- N/a
- The grading seemed a bit scattered and random. Would attempt to organize more objective standards between the different graders.
- tutorials in the future, maybe

Comments Report

Please add any other comments you have about workshops and tutors

- Everyone has been very careful
- I didn't find the labs particularly useful.
- I feel that the good break-down of the labs and coursework into parts means that I didn't have programming questions, the challenging parts of this course were for me theoretical which is why I feel tutorials would be more useful here.
- I would definitely add tutorials. There's no way labs can substitute tutorials (labs = very little time (if any at all) for individual approach and for talking with a demonstrator), which are in many other courses THE opportunity for solidifying one's understanding of the curriculum. I agree that the labs were in many cases really doable (even too easy, one could say) and hence it was not a terrible issue that there were way too many students for the 2 demonstrators. However, the labs/tutorial exercises could've been more challenging and together with adding tutorials this would make the entire course an even better learning experience.
- The lab leaders were not very useful.
- The tutors didn't really make themselves known during the tutorials. It would have been helpful if they had made it clear who they were so we could ask questions.